

# **Crime Victims Needs Assessment**

*Prepared for*

**The Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Office of Crime Victim Services**

**and**

**Citizens of Judicial District 7**

*by:*

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# Introduction

In 2005 the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services began a journey to develop a Crime Victim Needs Assessment process to document all crime related services across the State of Wisconsin and to understand the needs of counties and tribal communities. The goal is to document crime victims' unmet needs and communities' priorities related to crime victim services. As such, this project:

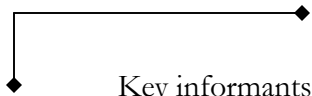
- ✓ Gathers comprehensive/consistent information from Wisconsin counties and tribes
- ✓ Assists communities to collaboratively set priorities
- ✓ Disseminates results in user-friendly format
- ✓ Reflects viewpoints of crime victims

In 2006 World Bridge Research began assisting the Department of Justice with this Crime Victim Needs Assessment effort using an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR was developed in contrast to conventional research approaches. PAR is characterized by having three primary components: 1) an iterative process for conducting research that includes reflection and action; 2) having community members and stakeholders involved with the research process; and 3) using findings to promote positive community change. These three approaches are interwoven throughout the project design and provide for a richer and more culturally sensitive assessment than a researcher directed traditional approach. Essentially PAR is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

*Essentially Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.*

To document all crime related services and unmet needs across Wisconsin, the Needs Assessment project began by interviewing key informants (victim/witness specialists/coordinators, law enforcement agencies (county and municipal), community service providers and representatives from local departments of human services) in each county and tribal community. Appointments were made with individuals and groups to ask them questions about:

- ✓ Community composition
- ✓ Services available to victims of crime
- ✓ Community assets
- ✓ Unmet needs of crime victims
- ✓ The underserved
- ✓ Crime trends
- ✓ Victim rights
- ✓ Innovative programs



Key informants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about unmet needs at the end of the interview. The survey and interview questions shared some similar topics with the interviews providing an opportunity for the research team to learn the insights and reasons behind interviewees' perspectives. A second round of key informant interviews were held with named victim service agencies and other agencies or groups providing victim services programming that were deemed innovative and not known by victim service grant makers.

To build upon the iterative process for assessment and action, findings from the key informant interviews and surveys were presented at the District 7 meeting. The meeting featured two parts – reflection and discussion about the findings from the interviews and surveys followed by a consensus building method using group participation technologies to identify recommendations for funding priorities for crime victim services needs and gaps.

In a final step for the district, the emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants of the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey.

*The three initial steps – interviews and surveys, district meeting and on-line survey – are summarized in this report.*

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These key informant interviews and surveys are to be rounded out with interviews and focus groups with victims/survivors of crime, members of underserved communities and representatives of statewide organizations. Also, an advisory group of victims, former victims and survivors from across the state oversees various aspects of the Needs Assessment's implementation.

# Summary

Judicial District 7 consists of the following 12 Wisconsin counties: Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Iowa, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, Jackson, Richland, and Vernon. Every county in the district was represented in the needs assessment process with 49 individuals interviewed, 16 participating at the District meeting and 14 responding to the follow-up online survey.

The following summaries were created from the key informant interviews and surveys collected in Judicial District 7.

## **Crime trends:**

- ✓ Crimes relating to drugs including methamphetamines, alcohol, and prescription drugs
- ✓ Internet crimes, identity theft and financial fraud
- ✓ Interpersonal crimes

## **Assets: commonly referred to services:**

- |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ Shelters             | ✓ Low cost legal services        |
| ✓ Poverty programs     | ✓ Mental health services         |
| ✓ Church groups        | ✓ Victim witness programs        |
| ✓ Runaway programs     | ✓ High school mentoring programs |
| ✓ Alcohol abuse groups |                                  |

## **Underserved crime victims:**

- ✓ Child victims of sexual abuse
- ✓ Victims with mental health issues
- ✓ Latinos and American Indians
- ✓ Rural victims of crime
- ✓ The “uninsured”
- ✓ The elderly
- ✓ Victims with developmental disabilities
- ✓ Domestic violence victims
- ✓ Homeless victims

## **Existing innovative services:**

- ✓ Restorative justice programs
- ✓ Foundation for victim support
- ✓ New homeless shelter for families
- ✓ Drug court programs

◆

**Programs on key informants' "wishlist" include:**

- ✓ More private and public transportation programs
- ✓ Shelters (both domestic and homeless)
- ✓ Mental health services
- ✓ Child advocacy centers
- ✓ Substance abuse treatment and training
- ✓ Better victim/witness waiting areas
- ✓ Updated court technology
- ✓ High school mentoring programs
- ✓ Counselors who are experts in child sexual abuse
- ✓ In-home counseling services
- ✓ Funds for homeless children

**A**t the district meeting, participants reflected on the above findings and using a consensus process answered the question "What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?" In a follow-up online survey District 7 residents were asked to prioritize the recommendations. The ranked recommendations were:

1. Flexible funding to go directly to victims for housing, transportation and other emergency needs.
2. Create, strengthen and expand legal response and support.
3. Direct services programs for all crime victims throughout their lifespan (such as advocacy, therapy, transportation, 24 hour hotline.
- and-
- Provide sensitivity training with focus on victim rights and needs (tie for third place.)
4. Affordable and available transportation for victims and their families.
5. Increase access and affordability to quality mental health services.
6. Seeking alternate ways (such as policy changes) for funding restitution and crime victim compensation.
7. Promotion of crime prevention programs.

A complete depiction of the ideas and victim needs that make up each funding recommendation can be found on page 17.



# Findings from Key Informant Interviews

**K**ey informants representing victim/witness specialists/coordinators, sheriff's offices, community service providers and departments of human services were interviewed from February 2007 – May 2007. A total of 49 individuals were interviewed (36 women and 13 men) in 15 individual and group interview settings. The following summarize the themes that emerged from these interviews.

## **Crime Trends**

**S**ome of the emerging crime trends that were discussed by key informants include: crimes relating to drugs including methamphetamines, alcohol and prescription drugs; internet crimes, identity theft and financial fraud; and interpersonal crimes.

Drugs: Many informants believe that there are serious drug issues in District 7 including drug trafficking, manufacturing and selling. Drug abuse and related offenses have also been linked by some key informants to violations of restraining orders, repeat offending and those with records committing new offenses. Because of the volume of drug activity one informant states,

*Because of the volume of drug activity one informant states, "Lots of crime involves a relationship with drug abuse. Common threads in crimes are drugs and alcohol."*

"Lots of crime involves a relationship with drug usage. Common threads in crimes are drugs and alcohol."

Many indicate that methamphetamine manufacturing has been virtually eliminated in most communities and that it is "shipped in" from Mexico. However, there is a perception that usage is increasing. There is also a perception that gang activity is surfacing again related to "meth" trafficking.

Prescription medication drug abuse is also an emerging crime trend. This has been said to have a huge impact on children when their parents are involved in abusing prescription medication. Also, if children are removed from their home, parents lose health insurance and that affects the ability of children to return home.

Internet Crimes, Identity Theft and Financial Fraud: Internet crimes, identity theft and other kinds of financial fraud are said to be "going wild" in District 7. In some cases, young persons are "mixing" with predators online, and it is leading to some trends with child sexual abuse.

There is a perception that there is lots of financial fraud and identity theft among the elderly, although it seems to be greatly underreported. There also appears to be a number



of mail scams that target the elderly. There often are not many resources to assist such victims and law enforcement states these types of crimes are difficult to prevent.

On a similar note businesses are sometimes the victim of financial crimes. One informant states,

“Embezzlements are on the rise ever since the gambling boats came to the Mississippi River.”

Economic abuse as a part of domestic violence has been identified as a challenge as well. It is said that abused partners sometimes cannot leave because they do not have any assets or their assets are frozen. This is even more of a challenge in areas that do not have a great deal of resources or are impoverished. Similarly, it is also a challenge to financially assist burglary victims who feel violated by having their homes invaded.

Interpersonal Crimes: There is a perception that violent, interpersonal crimes like sexual assault and domestic violence have increased. Some say the increase is due to population growth in some areas. There is also a perception that juvenile sex offending is on the rise. Some say sexual assault is linked to drinking among young people who know each other. There is also the notion that child abuse is vastly underreported.

### ***Underserved Populations***

**I**n key informant interviews those viewed as underserved include child victims of sexual abuse, Latinos, American Indians and those who are “uninsured”.

Child Victims of Sexual Abuse: Many see child victims of sexual assault as underserved because there are not enough services available. One informant states,

“Children have to travel long distances to find doctors who deal with sexual abuse.”

*It is suggested that rural children are the most underserved because of lack of resources.*

Many recognize that abused children do not have doctors or social programs to go to for help. It is suggested that rural children are the most underserved because of lack of resources.

Another reason child victims of sexual abuse are perceived to be underserved is that investigations of non-caregiver abuse is now handled by law enforcement and not human services. In such cases human services is not always clear when law enforcement wants them involved in investigations.

Latinos and American Indians: One informant states, “Hispanics and all Indians are much underserved. Very little is done with these groups.” Some key informants talked about the

language barriers faced by Latino and migrant communities. One barrier identified is that new immigrant communities prefer to keep to themselves. On the other hand the courts and service providers do not appear to have access to enough interpreters.

Some key informants talked about the challenges faced by members of the Ho-Chunk nation. One informant states, “Most people do not understand Indian culture and treat them disrespectfully.” Another informant states, “Ho-Chunk Indians especially have [a] hard time in this community.” Nepotism, housing segregation and a clash of cultural beliefs are stated as the primary barriers to service for this group.

*“Ho-Chunk Indians especially have [a] hard time in this community” Nepotism, housing segregation and a clash of cultural beliefs are stated as the primary barriers to service for this group.*

The “Uninsured”: Another group perceived to be the most underserved is the “uninsured”. They experience barriers to services due to lack of insurance and long waiting lists with county social services. One informant says, “I cannot find dentists to take medical assistance.” Another indicates, “you can’t get into treatment for ‘meth’ addiction unless you have private insurance. People without money are in this class. Drug arrests are increasing.”


### ***Innovative Services and “Wishlists”***

When asked what kinds of services victims are commonly referred to for assistance and support, many key informants indicated: shelters (both homeless and domestic abuse), poverty programs, church groups, runaway programs, alcohol abuse groups, low cost legal services, mental health services, victim witness programs and high school mentoring programs. Some communities did identify a few programs perceived to be unique or innovative:

1. A restorative justice program. Victims want to be involved and want to meet with their offenders. The program is evolving into a very important one.
2. Foundation for victim support. If a victim is from another state, the foundation pays for family members to be there to support the victim.
3. New homeless shelter for families.
4. Drug court program. This is a helpful program for children because it helps their parents stay clean and sober.

On the same note key informants also identified programs and services they wish they had available in their local community. In some cases these services were once available, but are no longer due to local funding reductions:

1. More private and public transportation programs.

- 
2. Shelters (both domestic abuse and homeless). There is no shelter in several communities.
  3. Mental health services. There are no proper services available in some communities, and the average wait in one community for a psychiatrist is six months.
  4. Child advocacy centers.
  5. Substance abuse treatment and training.
  6. Better victim/witness waiting areas. Some communities need better space management.
  7. Updated court technology.
  8. Counselors who are experts in child sexual abuse.
  9. In-home counseling services.
  10. Funds to provide foster care and treatment for homeless children whose parents are taken into custody for crimes

Assets key informants wish were available include:

1. Affordable housing.
2. Community centers.
3. A hospital - there is no hospital in one community.
4. Civil attorneys - there are no civil attorneys in some communities.

One community states that they have plenty of financial resources available but that the problem is with the distribution of funds. It was suggested that one department should coordinate and share all county funds as needed by the individual services.

### ***Barriers to Service***

**T**he two biggest barriers to services for victims identified are lack of funding for service staff and transportation. Funding is cited as a huge issue. One informant states, “We don’t have staff or money to properly serve the public.” Many say they are expected to do more with less and that the lack of funds makes it difficult to help victims of crime. Related to lack of funds are problems in courthouses with security. Some state they have difficulty with security for all cases due to lack of space.

Lack of transportation services is also seen as a barrier to service. It is suggested that services are mostly located in the county seat. In some cases it is almost an hour drive from farthest part of county to the county seat. In very rural areas there are lots of poor people who are hard to

*The two biggest barriers to services for victims identified are lack of funding for service staff and transportation....”We don’t have staff or money to properly service the public.”*

reach. Some communities have tried volunteer transportation programs, but they have not really “taken off”.

### ***Victim Rights Difficult to Enforce***

Most informants discussed the victim rights notification process used in their community and suggested that notification to victims of their rights is done well. However, when asked about which rights were difficult to enforce it was suggested that victims often want restitution, but there is a perception that they will never receive it. Also acknowledged was that employers do not always cooperate with victims who come to court and miss work. It was suggested that the State should rectify this problem with some sort of policy mandate.

## **Findings from Unmet Needs Survey Results**

Thirty-seven individuals representing law enforcement, victim/witness programs, human services and community-based victim service programs completed the Unmet Needs survey in the 12 counties that comprise Judicial District 7.

### ***Who are underserved?***

Seventy percent of the respondents think victims with mental health needs and sixty-two percent think victims who live in rural environments are underserved. Forty to fifty percent of respondents think the following groups are also underserved: victims with developmental disabilities, Latinos, the elderly, domestic violence victims and homeless victims of crime.

Who are underserved?	N = 37	%
Victims with mental health issues	26	70%
Rural victims	23	62%
Victims with developmental disabilities	18	49%
Latino victims	18	49%
The elderly	16	43%
Domestic violence victims	16	43%
Homeless victims	15	40%

When given a list of potentially underserved populations, District 7 interviewees strongly identified the list above. This list supplements the findings from the interviews and points out a few community groups that did not come readily to people’s minds during the interview discussions.

### ***Community Coordination and Unmet Needs***

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being “Not At All” and 3 and 4 being “Very Much”, please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system...” the following represent the majority “**Very Much**” response. Respondents could also answer “don’t know” or “not applicable”.

The current service system...	“Very Much” Response	N = 37	%
Is characterized by efficient and accurate communication.	Very Much	29	78%
Creates opportunities for joint planning across different types of agencies (e.g., legal, mental health, physical health, public safety, domestic violence, child welfare).	Very Much	28	76%
Shares information about what services agencies currently deliver or are planning to deliver.	Very Much	28	75%
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.	Very Much	25	68%
Provides services that are accessible.	Very Much	25	68%
Prevents crime victims from getting lost in the complex system.	Very Much	25	68%
Provides services that are individualized.	Very Much	24	65%
Can be accessed at different stages of victim recovery process.	Very Much	23	62%
Provides services that are gender specific.	Very Much	19	51%
Ensures that agencies have timely access to client records in ways that do not violate client confidentiality and/or rights.	Very Much	19	51%
Allows differing points of view to exist among organizations.	Very Much	19	51%
Fosters a “big picture” understanding of the service system and the roles/responsibilities of the agencies that constitute that system.	Very Much	18	50%

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being “Not At All” and 3 and 4 being “Very Much”, please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system...” the following represent the majority “**Not at All**” response. Respondents could also answer “don’t know or “not applicable”.

The current service system...	“Not at All” Response	N = 46	%
Provides services that incorporate non-traditional approaches.	Not at All	22	60%
Provides services that are culturally appropriate.	Not at All	22	60%
Develops clear community-wide goals and plans.	Not at All	21	57%
Involves crime victims in improving and/or changing services.	Not at All	20	54%
Addresses the issues of trauma.	Not at All	16	43%

### **Community Assets**

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being “Not At All” and 3 and 4 being “Very Much”, please rate the availability of these community assets, the following represent the majority “**Very Much**” response. Respondents could also answer “don’t know” or “not applicable”.

Services and Supports	“Very Much” Response	N = 37	%
Food Assistance	Very Much	32	86%
Early Childhood Programs Like Headstart	Very Much	30	81%
Recreation/Sports	Very Much	25	68%
Information And Referral Hotline	Very Much	23	62%
Senior Center/Programs	Very Much	22	60%
Health Education	Very Much	20	54%
After-School Programs	Very Much	18	49%
Job Training/Job Treatment	Very Much	17	46%
Support Groups	Very Much	17	46%

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being “Not At All” and 3 and 4 being “Very Much”, please rate the availability of these community assets, the following represent the *majority*\* “**Not at All**” response. Respondents could also answer “don’t know” or “not applicable”.

Services and Supports	“Not at All” Response	N = 37	%
Transportation Assistance	Not at All	29	78%
Supervised Visitation Exchange/Exchange Center(s)	Not at All	24	65%
Substance Abuse Assessment, Prevention And Treatment	Not at All	24	65%
Violence Prevention	Not at All	21	57%
Mentoring	Not at All	21	57%
Housing Assistance	Not at All	20	54%
Mental Health Services	Not at All	20	54%
Community Service Learning	Not at All	18	49%
Low Cost Or Free Clothing, Furniture And Housewares	Not at All	18	49%
Family Support Center/Services	Not at All	17	46%
Services For Persons With Disabilities	Not at All	17	46%

# District Meeting Findings and Prioritization Survey

Sixteen people from five counties (La Crosse, Trempealeau, Jackson, Richland, and Vernon) in Judicial District 7 attended the Crime Victim Needs Assessment Priority Setting Meeting in La Crosse, Wisconsin on August 8, 2007. The group included three victim/witness coordinators, seven domestic violence/sexual assault community organization staff (three from hospital-based programs), two representatives for departments of human services, one sheriff's department representative and one employee from a justice sanctions program. A staff member with the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services was also present.

An overview of the Office of Crime Victim Services needs assessment project was presented including the findings from interviews and surveys conducted throughout the Judicial District 7. Though 49 people were interviewed in District 7, only a small number of participants in the meeting participated in the interviews. Thus, much of this information presented was new to the meeting participants.

For the meeting, the findings discussed previously in this report were grouped to create a cohesive, flowing story of the interview and survey progress. The sections included: Crime trends, Assets, Underserved populations, Barriers to services, Innovative services and "wishlist", and Crime victims rights.

## ***Crime Trends:***

As the group learned of the findings, the following reactions emerged relating to crime trends and their experience:

- ✓ In our community, kids are stealing money from parents for drugs or just stealing their parent's drugs. They are having "Skittle" parties - kids bringing drugs from home, throwing them in a bowl and eating them like candy.
- ✓ People are breaking into homes to steal prescription drugs.
- ✓ Lack of resources for victims - sense they'll never get paid anyway.
- ✓ For sexual assault victims there is a lack of resources and they often lack job skills.
- ✓ All crimes are getting more violent; more injuries. Some wonder if the increase is about better documenting.
- ✓ Many issues are coming together in multiples, i.e. mental health, sexual assault, domestic violence.
- ✓ People noted an increase in number of juveniles involved in the domestic violence.



The group was surprised by the following ideas:

- ✓ The perception that juvenile crimes are up even though statistically juvenile crime is down. Perhaps the severity of juvenile crime is capturing our attention.
- ✓ Severity in general of crime was on people's minds. Most crimes seem more and more violent, and we've noticed more women to women violent crime.

### ***Assets:***

The group reviewed a list of services that interviewees indicated are solid in their communities. The meeting participants agreed that for many communities senior services were doing fairly well along with early childhood services and information and referral services. For others recreation and sports were lacking and not inclusive, and job training was missing for some. Support groups could be improved and senior transportation, while strong for some was lacking for others.


### ***Underserved Populations and Wishlist:***

The meeting participants would have added people with mental and physical disabilities to the list of people who were underserved. All on the list resonated for the group.

The group agreed strongly with the need for specialized counselors in areas like childhood sexual assault and for people with dual and multiple diagnoses, child advocacy centers, domestic violence shelters and shelters for homeless and single women, and the need to focus on mental health services in our shelters.

### ***Crime Victims Rights:***

- ✓ Crime victim compensation is a problem – there's an emerging trend not to cover medical bills or medication – i.e. sexual assault exam. A few stories were told of victims who had reported the crime (especially in sexual assault) who were later denied claims because the system decided not to prosecute.
- ✓ Another compensation issue emerged when drinking is involved by the victim. In some cases when an intimate partner assault in front of a bar is labeled a bar fight there is concern about how the victim will be perceived by CVC.
- ✓ Criminal court system – victims immediately are required to reveal everything; this can be re-victimizing especially if required each time the case is adjourned.
- ✓ Process too slow.
- ✓ Burden is on the victim to request the right to confer. Yet often victims miss the opportunity because plea agreements are reached before victims can get their opinion heard. The burden to confer should lie with the State.



For the second part of the meeting, participants incorporated the interview findings and their reflections into a consensus process which answered the question “What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?” See Appendix A for more details.

In a final step to understand the victim services needs in District 7, these emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants from the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey. Fourteen individuals representing nine counties (including Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Iowa and Monroe; five counties not present at the district meeting) voted to prioritize the needs.

The ranked recommendations were:

1. Flexible funding to go directly to victims for housing, transportation and other emergency needs.
2. Create, strengthen and expand legal response and support.
3. Direct service programs for all crime victims throughout their lifespan (such as advocacy, therapy, transportation, 24 hour hotline.  
- and-  
Provide sensitivity training with focus on victim rights and needs  
(tie for third place.)
4. Affordable and available transportation for victims and their families.
5. Increase access and affordability to quality mental health services.
6. Seeking alternate ways (such as policy changes) for funding restitution and crime victim compensation.
7. Promotion of crime prevention programs.

# Implications

**Top Ranked Funding Priority Recommendation:** In interviews, private and public transportation programs were identified as a significant need in District 7. This need remained ever present in the district meeting both during the reflection on the interview findings and during the recommendation consensus building. The discussion of the need for transportation furthered the participants understanding and calls for **Flexible funding directly for victims for housing, transportation, and other emergency needs**, a recommendation which was ranked as the number one priority for the district. In addition to funds for accessible and affordable transportation, participants sought to apply flexible funds to emergency needs as diverse as medicine and medical bills to childcare, housing and food. At its core this recommendation seeks to provide flexibility to service providers and victims to apply direct funding to their most pressing needs following a crime and during their recovery.

Issues concerning the legal needs of crime victims follow closely behind as a recommendation. Echoing a call for innovative legal-related services such as drug court programs, child advocacy centers, updated court technology, better courthouse space management and victim/witness waiting areas, and restorative justice programs, the district meeting participants crafted a recommendation that was ranked as the second district need: **Create, strengthen and expand legal response and support.** This recommendation links the strengthening of existing services such as victim/witness and legal advocacy with the creation or expansion of services such as affordable attorneys, childcare at courthouses, child exchange sites. A unique idea of GPS tracking in place of electronic monitoring also emerged.

District 7 identified a general funding priority of **Direct service programs for all crime victims throughout lifespan such as advocacy, therapy, transportation and 24 hour hotline.** This recommendation for funding seeks to address all victims of crime and all crime trends while specifically identifying many of the “underserved” groups in the district: people with disabilities, domestic violence and sexual assault victims, child victims of sexual assault and the elderly. This recommendation incorporates many wishlist items that interviewees identified such as domestic violence shelters, child advocacy centers, counselors who are experts in child sexual abuse and in-home counseling services. By creating and subsequently ranking this recommendation as third, service providers throughout the district recognized the need to provide and sustain comprehensive quality services for all crime victims.

The need for overall improvement of services was recognized by the recommendation **Provide sensitivity training with focus on victim rights and needs**, which also ranked third by the district. This recommendation could address many of the needs of groups that were identified as underserved in the district such as people with disabilities (a group listed in the recommendation); victims with mental health issues, the elderly, children, Latinos, American Indians and the homeless. In particular court personnel such as judges and

prosecutors were identified as professionals who could benefit by additional training to assist them in meeting crime victims' needs.

As recognized above, transportation needs resoundingly emerged in the interviews, surveys and district meeting. Evidence of the universality of the need is highlighted by the fact that it is included in four of the eight recommendations: **flexible funding, legal response, direct service, and increase access and affordability of mental health services.** In addition to including transportation needs as part of these priorities, the meeting participants created a stand alone category dedicated solely to the need for **Affordable, available transportation for victims and their families.** By embedding transportation as well as raising it into its own category, district members emphasize that services for victims across the board need to recognize and address the need for transportation and matching funding.


The other emerging priority needs areas include:

- ✓ Increase Access and Affordability of Quality Mental Health Services
- ✓ Promotion of Crime Prevention Programs
- ✓ Seek Alternative Ways such as Policy Changes for Funding Restitution and Crime Victim Compensation

***B*uilding on Community Assets:** It appears that victims with mental health needs, who live in rural communities, who are homeless, Latino, American Indian or who have developmental disabilities are considered the “underserved” by key informants according to survey results. To make matters more difficult, assets that could be a starting point for these groups are also “not at all available.” Key informants suggest that there isn’t enough transportation services, mental health services, alcohol and other drug services, housing, language interpretation or developmental disability services available in their communities. Thus the district meeting saw the emergence of **Increase access and affordability of quality mental health services, Flexible funding and Sensitivity training** as much needed and desired groups of services for crime intervention.

Senior centers are considered “very much” available in this district and could assist in reaching out to elders as an underserved community. Also, a number of assets like job training, support groups and information and referral programs could be a link to help with the needs of domestic violence victims and perhaps the homeless.

For many communities in District 7, services that have been provided in other sister communities were identified as innovative and part of their desired programming. These services include restorative justice programs, a foundation for victim support, new homeless shelter for families, and drug court programs. Similarly these programs are echoed in a “wishlist” of needed services:

- 
- ✓ More private and public transportation programs.
  - ✓ Shelters (both domestic abuse and homeless)—there is no shelter in several communities.
  - ✓ Mental health services—there are no proper services available in some communities and the average wait in one community for a psychiatrist is six months.
  - ✓ Child advocacy centers.
  - ✓ Substance abuse treatment and training.
  - ✓ Better victim/witness waiting areas—some communities need better space management.
  - ✓ Updated court technology.
  - ✓ Counselors who are experts in child sexual abuse.
  - ✓ In-home counseling services.
  - ✓ Funds to provide foster care and treatment for homeless children whose parents are taken into custody for crimes.

Many items on this “wishlist” resonated for the participants at the district meeting and these ideas were coupled with similar ones to build the list of recommendations.

# Appendix A

What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?							
Direct Service Programs for all Crime Victims Throughout Life Span such as advocacy, therapy, transportation & 24hr hotline	Create, Strengthen and Expand Legal Response and Support	Flexible Funding Directly to Victim for Housing, Transportation, other Emergency Needs	Increase Access and Affordability of Quality Mental Health Services	Provide Sensitivity Training with Focus on Victim Rights and Needs	Affordable, Available Transportation for Victims and their Families	Promotion of Crime Prevention Programs	Seek Alternative Ways such as Policy Changes for Funding Restitution and CVC
<p>Childhood sexual assault (advocacy, therapy, transportation)</p> <p>Domestic violence shelter and services (advocacy, therapy, transportation)</p> <p>Response team (immediate 24/7)</p> <p>Accessibility to resources and equipment (for Deaf and Hard of Hearing)</p> <p>Direct services to crime victims throughout the life span</p> <p>Child exchange sites</p>	<p>Legal Support Services (V/W, advocacy, attorney resources)</p> <p>Committed and affordable attorneys</p> <p>Childcare at court houses</p> <p>Enhance support for CJ process (see emergency funding)</p> <p>GPS tracking in place of electronic monitoring</p> <p>Child exchange sites</p>	<p>Temporary housing options</p> <p>Emergency funding (medicine, transportation, housing, medical bills, childcare)</p> <p>Transitional housing (low income, safe, on public transportation routes)</p> <p>Safe and affordable housing</p> <p>Emergency vouchers for food, housing, medication</p> <p>Accessible and affordable transportation</p>	<p>Consistent MH services</p> <p>MH services and medications</p> <p>MH services that are affordable and accessible and have transportation</p> <p>Access to appropriate multi diagnosis counseling</p>	<p>Plea Agreements reached after 1<sup>st</sup> hearing with victim's input</p> <p>Sensitivity training for court personnel (including Judges and Prosecutors)</p> <p>Training providers to work with people with disabilities</p>	<p>Accessible Transportation</p> <p>Affordable and available transportation for victims and their families</p>	<p>Mentoring for juvenile victim and offenders</p> <p>Educational Youth Centers</p>	<p>State paid restitution</p> <p>Crime Victim Compensation for those who meet the requirements</p>

